

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for tracing an electronic device transmitting identifying indicia over a global network, the electronic device connectable to a network server through the global network, the method comprising the steps of:

determining identifying indicia for the electronic device that are transmitted by the electronic device during communications over the global network;

automatically monitoring communications over the global network to identify data transmitted through the global network that contains the identifying indicia; and

upon identification of data transmitted through the global network that contains the identifying indicia, determining the location of the electronic device by tracing the source of the identifying indicia within the global network.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the global network includes Internet.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining the identifying indicia by extracting the identifying indicia from data previously transmitted by the electronic device and stored on the global network.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the identifying indicia is the MAC address of the electronic device.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying indicia is determined by indexing
2 a known hostname or IP address of the electronic device contained within data previously
3 transmitted by the electronic device and stored on the global network.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the network server with one
2 or more global network communication links used to enable transmission between the
3 electronic device and the network server, wherein the transmission via the
4 communication links is used for determining the location of the electronic device.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising entering the identifying indicia into a
2 database stored in the network server and performing a matching function on the network
3 server that compares the data transmitted over the global network with the database to
4 identify transmitted data containing the identifying indicia.

1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising, upon identification of data transmitted
2 through the global network that contains the identifying indicia, notifying a responsible
3 party that data transmitted through the global network contains the identifying indicia.

9. A system for tracing an electronic device transmitting identifying indicia over a global network, the system comprising:

a hardware fingerprint server that can determine identifying indicia for the electronic device that are transmitted by the electronic device during communications over the global network;

a monitoring server, wherein the electronic device connectable to the monitoring server through the global network, that monitors communications over the global network to identify data transmitted through the global network that contains the identifying indicia; and

a tracing server that, upon identification of data transmitted through the global network that contains the identifying indicia, determines the location of the electronic device by tracing the source of the identifying indicia within the global network.

10. A system according to claim 9, wherein the global network includes Internet.

11. A system according to claim 9, wherein the hardware fingerprint server determines the identifying indicia by extracting the identifying indicia from data previously transmitted by the electronic device and stored on the global network.

12. A system according to claim 9, wherein the identifying indicia is the MAC address of the electronic device.

13. A system according to claim 9, wherein the hardware fingerprint server determines the identifying indicia by indexing a known hostname or IP address of the

3 electronic device contained within data previously transmitted by the electronic device
4 and stored on the global network.

1 14. A system according to claim 9, wherein the monitoring server contains a database
2 storing identifying indicia and performs a matching function that compares data
3 transmitted over the global network with the database to identify transmitted data
4 containing the identifying indicia.

15. A program product for tracing an electronic device transmitting identifying indicia over a global network, the electronic device connectable to a network server through the global network, comprising:

a computer-readable medium;

a controller function encoded in the computer-readable medium, the controller function comprising the steps of:

determining identifying indicia for the electronic device that are transmitted by the electronic device during communications over the global network;

automatically monitoring communications over the global network to identify data transmitted through the global network that contains the identifying indicia; and

upon identification of data transmitted through the global network that contains the identifying indicia, determining the location of the electronic device by tracing the source of the identifying indicia within the global network.

16. A program product according to claim 15, the controller function further comprising determining the identifying indicia by extracting the identifying indicia from data previously transmitted by the electronic device and stored on the global network.

17. A program product according to claim 15, the controller function further comprising determining the identifying indicia by indexing a known hostname or IP address of the electronic device contained within data previously transmitted by the electronic device and stored on the global network.

18. A program product according to claim 15, the controller function further comprising providing the network server with one or more global network communication links used to enable transmission between the electronic device and the

network server, wherein the transmission via the communication links is used for determining the location of the electronic device.

19. A program product according to claim 15, the controller function further comprising entering the identifying indicia into a database stored in the network server and performing a matching function on the network server that compares the data transmitted over the global network with the database to identify transmitted data containing the identifying indicia.

20. A program product according to claim 15, the controller function further comprising , upon identification of data transmitted through the global network that contains the identifying indicia, notifying a responsible party that data transmitted through the global network contains the identifying indicia.